1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

sticks, in the holes that have been made, in order to keep them from closing up. After the healing of the wound, these plugs are, however taken out, and it is only when the boys have reached the age of puberty, that the ear-lobe is gradually distended by means of plugging with a succession of ear blocks, or ear-lobe discs, of increasing sizes. Only youths of mature age, and men, are allowed to take part in certain religious dances. At the performance of these, it is of especial importance to be protected from evil spirits. According to the belief of the Indians, ear discs afford them such protection,[1] and it is therefore possible that this is the reason why the boys begin wearing ear discs only after having attained puberty. For reasons which I shall explain below, I consider that the *piercing of the ear-lobes by no means always implies wearing of ear-lobe discs*. Among the Choroti, the ears of little girls are often pierced in the same way as in the case of the boys[2] (see the woman with pierced ear-lobes in fig. 22), *but never once did I see a Choroti woman wearing discs in her ears*, nor is there in the literature on these Indians any photographic evidence to be found, as far as I know, of Choroti women wearing ear discs. Further; neither Baron Erland Nordenskiöld,[3] nor Doctor Rafael Karsten, both explorers who have lived for a long time among the Choroti, are now able to recollect with any certainty having seen any Choroti woman wearing ear discs.

To cause bleeding by perforating the skin, has among the Chorotis, as among other tribes in the Chaco — a magic significance, and the possession of many scars is considered a great advantage. Thus, for instance, the Chaco Indians will with ostentation and satisfaction show even scars from bites of the palometa fish. When the Choroti believe themselves possessed by some evil spirit, they prick themselves with sharp-pointed bone awls, and imagine that the spirit leaves the body with the outflowing blood. About this custom, Karsten writes: »If the arm fails or trembles in pulling the bow, its weakness is, according to the belief of the Chorotis, due to the presence of a mohsek in the blood and they think that the evil demon will leave the body with the blood drawn. The scars left by the cuts are kept up with care and shown with satisfaction,

[1] Karsten (6), p. 194, and Grubb (1), p. 73.

[2] Nordenskiöld observed in a Choroti village that *all* the girls had their ears pierced. According to a letter of his, dated 13 May, 1931. Rockefeller collection of manuscripts, volume 1931, letter N.

[3] According to letter referred to in footnote 2.

? L should be Choroti. - Analyst]

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6
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Ci 304 755 751

almost with pride. *Evidently it is thought that the very scars afterwards act as a sort of charm against the spirits.*'[1]

If scars left by wounds are considered to possess desirable, magical properties, it would easily be supposed that perforations that have been kept open must possess the same properties in a greatly enhanced degree. Among the Chiriguano, neighbours of the Choroti, the actual piercing of the lower lip constituted the most important of the ceremonial acts performed on the boys on their having attained puberty, and among the Chané — whose culture is akin to that of the Chiriguano — not only was the lower lip pierced on this occasion, but the boys were also given other wounds on the body.[2]

Co 881 304 171

Ci 304 789

From what I have adduced above, it will therefore be seen that, according to the belief of the Indians, *the making of punctures or perforations on the body, has in itself magic effects, and, consequently, that these magic effects are not believed to arise with the fixing of some ornamental object of magical character — e. g., a tembeta, or an ear disc — into the perforation.*

Ci 304 789 562

This being so, here, in my opinion, lies the explanation of the fact that Choroti girls sometimes have pierced ear-lobes, although it has never *with certainty* been shown that they ever wear ear discs. On the other hand, from reasons I shall present below, it is *probable* that old Choroti women, with distended ear-lobes, *exceptionally* do wear ear discs.

I myself, as well as other investigators of the Chaco peoples, have seen elderly women among the Choroti with holes in their ears so large that one was forced to suppose that the lobes had been stretched in some way or other. Such stretching, however, may not *necessarily* be due to the wearing of ear blocks, but *may* have been produced by manual manipulation. That, by such means, perfectly monstrous distension of the soft parts of the body can very well be brought about, is proved by, among other things, the practice of the Hottentot women of lengthening out — merely by frequent pulling — the labia minora into an enormous size.[3] A similar stretching of the hole in the ear-lobe might, from the Indians' point of view, have for its object the increasing, proportionately to its size, the magic properties of the hole. Among the Incas, the size

[1] Karsten (4), p. 137. Italics by von Rosen.
[2] Karsten (4), p. 200.
[3] von Luschan (1), p. 378.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

776 [764] character.[1] When there has been a death in a village, certain precautionary measures have to be taken in order that the spirit who caused the death may not in some way or other work further evil.

But also on all other possible occasions the spirits are capable of working harm, indeed, Karsten is of opinion that the Indians, even when doing such commonplace acts as eating and drinking, fear that malicious spirits may surreptiously effect an entrance into them along with the food or drink.[2] That the Indians have this belief is not so very remarkable. Similar conceptions are to be found among many peoples in different continents, and have also been widely spread in Europe. To mention one instance; in olden times on yawning or sneezing there was the custom of making the sign of the cross before the mouth, a custom founded on the fear that the devil or some of his kindred should slip in through the open mouth.

●751 As a means of protecting themselves against evil spirits, or for securing, in a magical way, other advantages, the Choroti make use of a variety of devices, the most important of which are the covering of the body, painting of the face, dyeing textiles and other objects red, tattooing, wearing of amulets and certain ornaments, singing, blowing of whistles and shaking rattles, beating of drums, dancing, games of hazard, cutting or pulling out of hairs, and blood-letting.

The custom, previously mentioned, of the girls at their first menstruation keeping their heads covered with a cloth, is an instance of the first-mentioned magical means of protection.

302 751 At dances and lovers' meetings the Indians paint their faces (see page 78), but they adorn themselves by face-painting also on other occasions. As an instance, men as well as women usually had their faces painted when visiting us in our camp. At the time we took this to be a manifestation of Indian vanity, but after having read Karsten's detailed account of the reasons for painting the face among the Indians, I am more inclined to the belief that this painting had been applied as a protection against such unknown spirit forces as might possibly threaten them in the camp of the whites.

831 302 751 That painting of the face is done at dances and meetings of a sexual character, is a circumstance connected with the Indian belief that occasions

[1] Karsten (1), p. 36, and (4), p. 17.
[2] Karsten (3), p. 305.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

of that kind are especially apt to make it easy for the spirits to acquire possession of human beings. When a woman paints her face, that fact may, therefore, indirectly constitute a sign that she desires sexual intercourse, although the painting may perhaps have been done for the magical reasons above indicated.[1]

On page 58 I have remarked that on a reed-casing for keeping ostrich plumes the holes and the edges of the lids were painted red. This red-painting cannot very well be of a decorative character, seeing that there is not much of the paint visible when the lid is closed. According to my opinion, it is very probable that the paint has been applied in order to protect the delicate ostrich plumes contained in the casing from sustaining harm from evil spirits. The fact is that there is, among the Indians, a wide-spread belief that decay and similar processes are caused by evil spirits, on account of which it has been customary among certain Indian tribes to paint not only corpses but also grave equipment with red paint for the purpose of preservation against decay. And we also possess positive evidence that among certain Indian tribes the custom prevails of providing the property of the living with a similar magically protective, painting.

When through Karsten's paper on Indian conceptions as to the significance of painting,[2] my attention had been drawn to these circumstances, I took to examining most of the objects I had found as grave furniture at Quebrada del Toro and Puna de Jujuy (Argentina) in order to ascertain whether any of these objects had been painted before being put with the dead.[3] This examination revealed that nine wooden objects seemed to be painted all over with red paint, but as I, owing to the objects having lain such a long time in the ground, was unable with certainty to decide whether these objects really were painted, or whether their red colour was due to the natural colour of the wood, I had the objects in question submitted to chemical examination. It was then established that the objects were painted, and that the paint consisted of ferrix oxide, almost pure,[4] (so therefore not uruku, which is prepared from Bixa Orellana).

[1] Cf. Karsten (4), Chap. I.

[2] Karsten (4), Chap. I.

[3] As a result of the fact that all the ethnographical and archæological collections of the Riksmuseum are stored in most unsuitable premises, it has not been possible to find all of the objects.

[4] Analytical report No. 211954, Chemico-Technical Bureau (Kemiskt-Tekniska Byrån).

172 Particulars of the objects in question are given in the table here below:

Objects painted all over with red paint, found by the author in ancient Indian graves at Casabindo. Puna de Jujuy. Argentina.

Rikem. coll. No.	Class of object	No. of fig. in von Rosen (10)	No. of page on which object is mentioned in von Rosen (10)
03. 3. 6797	Long handled spoon	—	38
03. 3. 6836	Pointed stick	53	37
03. 3. 6809	Distaff	—	31
03. 3. 6819	Small club (fish club?)	42	34
03. 3. 6833	» » » »	41	33
03. 3. 6830	Wooden knife	39	38
03. 3. 6871	Miniature bow	45	34
03. 3. 6873	Fragments of arrow shaft	-	35
03. 3. 6831	Mesh spacer	39	32

304 751 On page 72 et seq., I have already described the manner in which the Choroti tattoo themselves, and also pointed out that this tattooing is of a magical character whilst at the same time this practice, like the painting of the face, is to a certain extent connected with the sexual life of the Indians. It is highly probable that not only the painting, but also the tattooing, of the face among the Choroti is done in order to prevent evil spirits from entering the body by way of eyes, nose, mouth and ears.[1] The arrow-like signs that sometimes are found as ornament done in tattooing or painting among the Chaco Indians (see for instance fig. 66), are, according to Karsten, in some way connected with the circumstance that the spirit of illness, called »mohsek ihitek» (i. e., the arrow-shooting mohsek) uses arrows for working harm upon people, for which reason arrows may be considered as amulets.[2] This, the Indians' way of looking at things, corresponds to the old saw: »like cures like», or »taking a hair from the dog that bit one».

531 751 Figures and ornamental signs, incised or burned-in, on calabashes for household use (figs. 127, 129—132) as well as on magic rattles of calabash (figs. 170 and 181), are, at least in certain cases, to be regarded as magical protective devices against evil spirits.[3] The significance of two figures, resembling human beings, carved on the magic rattle in fig. 181.

[1] Karsten (4), pp. 8 and 10.
[2] Karsten (4), pp. 190 and 191.
[3] Karsten (3), p. 179.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

I cannot tell, but from an analogous carving from the Lengua it is very probable that they represent spirits.[1]

Most rattles contain seeds, and in many of them are also found a large number of metal fragments (see synoptical table below). The latter as a rule consist of small, square pieces of tin plate, for the most part with a side of from 5 to 15 millimetres. Bits of glass do not unfrequently occur in the rattles, although never in any great numbers; generally only a few bits of glass are found in any one rattle. In the Chaco, bits of glass are naturally extremely rare. In the rattle reproduced in fig. 181 were only found bits of tin plate and one cactus spine. Although this rattle belongs to the handle hole type (see pp. 148, 149), it nevertheless has a hole in the bottom, with a plug of the kind I have described in connexion with the magic rattle, fig. 170. Professor Robert Fries has been kind enough to examine the different kinds of seeds that I have found in magic rattles, as well as in the bag mentioned below, and he then determined the presence of a species of Canna, a leguminous plant, a species of Convolvulaceæ, one of Sapotaceæ and a Smilax. Several kinds of seeds could not be identified from lack of material to compare them with.

Synoptic table of contents in magic rattles from the Choroti.

Riksm. coll. 03. 3.

No. of rattle	Type of rattle	Contents
386	Plugged hole through bottom. Carrying cord (fig. 170).	Seeds (Smilax and undetermined), 1 dark blue piece of glass.
385	Ditto.	Seeds (Smilax and Canna), 2 bits of zinc plate, 1 spiral spring of iron, 2 cactus spines.
390	Plugged hole through top of handle, ditto through bottom. No carrying cord. (fig. 181)	Nine bits of plate iron, one cactus spine.
384	Like foregoing, but no hole at the bottom.	Seeds (Canna and undetermined), 2 bits of plate iron.
387	Ditto.	Seeds (Smilax, a leguminous plant, and of unknown species), 34 black glass beads, 1 blue glass bead and 4 yellowish-green bits of glass.
388	Ditto.	Seeds (Convolvulaceæ and unknown), 1 piece of zinc plate, and 1 uncoloured piece of glass.

From a Choroti I obtained by barter a small bag of red cloth (Riksm. 03. 3. 391), abundantly wound round with caraguatá string, in which he said he used to keep the things that he put into magic rattles.

[1] Grubb (1), p. 74, and fig. a on plate following p. 76.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

Steinen,[1] Koch-Grünberg[2] and Karsten[3] have made specially thorough research into questions connected with this matter.

From primitive peoples it is, however, exceedingly difficult to obtain thoroughly reliable information. In order to get rid of a tiresome questioner, a negro, or an Indian, will often reply in the way he thinks most pleasing to his interrogator. Information received by means of an interpreter, is not unfrequently unreliable. This explains how statements which are absolutely erroneous have found their way into the works of even the most painstaking ethnographers. Another pitfall consists in drawing hasty conclusions based on analogies. There is this to be remembered; that primitive peoples' process of thinking sometimes runs along lines which deviate entirely from those of civilized man, for which reason conditions which, to us, appear analogous may, to the primitive mind, not necessarily appear as being in any way connected.

Although it has not yet been conclusively proved that all Choroti ornaments are of a magic character, it is nevertheless not improbable that such is the case. About many of the ornamental objects of the Choroti there are thoroughly trustworthy proofs as to their magic character. When from two or more members of a tribe circumstantial and practically identical, accounts of the magic properties of some ornamental object have been obtained, there can, of course, be no hesitation in accepting that the object in question is, by the Indians, regarded as a kind of amulet.

Among the finest of Choroti ornaments possessing a magic character I am inclined to class the frontlets and hair-nets of red woollen fabric (figs. 41, 46 and 47) that the Choroti use on occasions of especial importance. Several Choroti stated to me that these full-dress articles of apparel were worn not only as ornaments, but also as charms against evil spirits, and the same belief prevails among the Lengua as regards *their* ornaments of a corresponding kind (see fig. 42).[4]

That the Choroti regard their ear-lobe discs (see figs. 53—55) as possessing magic properties, I have already stated in connexion with my account of the character of those ornaments (pp. 62—66).

[1] E. g., von den Steinen (2).
[2] E. g., Koch-Grünberg (3).
[3] Karsten (4).
[4] Grubb (1), pp. 70 and 71.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

As regards snail- and mussel-shell necklaces (figs. 56—58) it should be specially mentioned that those of the first-named kind, at least, are by the Choroti looked upon as amulets for warding off illness and other evil things.[1] It is not improbable that necklaces made out of glass beads, which have been obtained from the whites, are also held to be amulets. This because of the fact that, among many primitive peoples, the belief has been observed that such glass beads as in modern times they have acquired by way of trading[2] possess magic properties,[3] as well as do the glass-[4] or stone beads[5] that they themselves have found in ancient dwelling-site deposits or graves.

Occasionally the Choroti wear anklets of birdskin, or ostrich (Rhea) feathers tied together (fig. 59). On page 71) I have mentioned that these anklets are not exclusively ornaments, but that they also serve a purely practical purpose. The fact is that the Choroti, as well as other Chaco Indians, regard them as a protection against snake-bite, in that a snake is more likely to strike at the feathers that are on the anklet than at the leg, or foot, of the one who is wearing it. Karsten states, on the authority of Grubb, that the Lengua for the same reason wear anklets made of feathers. But to Karsten this natural explanation is not sufficient, for he remarks that Grubb might have added that these anklets are, at the same time, looked upon as amulets, because the Indians believe that an evil spirit accompanies the snake venom in entering the foot of a person bitten.[6] Karsten endeavours to show that all feather ornaments are, by the Choroti Indians, regarded as magic objects.[7]

Most primitive peoples ascribe magical properties to many of their belongings. For example, our Viking forefathers largely regarded their weapons and other equipment as possessing magical powers. It is well known that the Vikings believed that, for instance, swords, and other edged implements, in some magic way could give their owners protection against evil spirits. But the main purpose of swords and edged tools was

[1] Karsten (1), p. 139.
[2] See for example von Rosen (1), p. 305.
[3] See fig. 182: 30, 31, and text on pp. 169 and 170.
[4] See, e. g., von Rosen (1), p. 251.
[5] See, e. g., von Rosen (1) p. 300.
[6] »He might have added that they are at the same time regarded as magical charms, since with the snake's poison an evil spirit is believed to enter the foot.» Karsten (1), p. 119.
[7] Karsten (1), Chap. III.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112
Choroti SK6

M 304 inflammation in the face the girl has to fast for some days after the operation.

M 304 751 Tattooing has a purely magical significance, as may be inferred from the fact that the Mataco and the Choroti women regard it particularly as a protection against disease. Analyzing the custom, we can distinguish at least three factors in it, all of which are associated with magical ideas: first, the scarification or bleeding itself; second, the matter (soot, ashes) rubbed into the wounds; and third, the patterns and marks incised which remain when the wounds have healed. Bleeding and scarification are common practices of purely magical significance among all Indians of South America, and as far as the Pilcomayo tribes are concerned I shall have occasion to mention this custom again in a later chapter. The very scars left after such operations are regarded as a protection against evil spirits. Further, that tattooing is done by means of ashes or soot is certainly not an accident. The use of ashes for superstitious purposes is of frequent occurrence among the Indians, the general idea being that ashes are a prophylactic against evil spirits. The custom of mixing ashes or soot with saliva is significant from the same point of view, for magical virtues are commonly ascribed to the saliva.

M [789]

M [827]

C 304 751 789 All women among the Choroti are tattooed in the same way, that is, have the same marks and patterns applied to the face, and no full-grown woman lacks this tribal characteristic. Since tattooing is regarded as a permanent protection against evil spirits and sickness, it is natural that a woman lacking it should be shunned by the men, but it is not a means of attraction or a »decoration» in the common sense of the word.

T 304 184 [362] As to the *T o b a s*, tattooing or the custom of making indelible marks on the body or the face was formerly in vogue among all Toba tribes as among all peoples of the Guaycurú-group; but the Bolivian Tobas of the present day have dropped this custom, contenting themselves with simple body painting. Tattooing among the Tobas seems to have been limited to the female sex, as indeed is the rule among the Chaco tribes. According to d'Orbigny, the Toba girls were tattooed when they attained puberty and became marriageable. Since the custom is no longer practised by the Bolivian Tobas I have not seen how it is done by them. The procedure, however, is the same as among other Chaco tribes, incisions being made in the face and ashes rubbed into the wounds. As appears from the photographs of some Toba women which Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche took in Buenos Aires in 1899 the tattooing practised by the Toba women was exceedingly elaborate and complicated.

2: Kärsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

The *ear-tubes* which are worn as ornaments for instance by the Choroti, Ashluslay and Toba-Pilagá and which consist of wooden plugs or pieces of cane, sometimes of tremendous size, are likewise nothing but magical charms or amulets. This was clearly indicated by the Choroti, who told me that the ear-discs are worn to prevent the evil spirits, the *möhsei*, from penetrating into the ears. Their hugeness and peculiarity is evidently thought to act as a deterrent upon the spirits, and there seems to be the idea that the larger they are the more efficacious.

The Indians of the Pilcomayo use various kinds of *necklaces*, and it seems to be the rule that among the most primitive tribes, such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, they are more worn by men than by women, among the more civilized Tobas again more by women than by men. Speaking of the dress of the Choroti, I mentioned the large and costly kind of necklace consisting of snail's shells elaborately fashioned into small round buttons with a hole drilled in the centre and closely strung together. The necklace, called *lähslehuésle* in the Choroti language, is not only an ornament but at the same time a magical charm. The Choroti no doubt gave me the true explanation of their original significance when they told me that the necklace is a protection against sickness. The evil spirits, according to the idea of these Indians, preferably attach themselves to the throat or the chest, because catarrhs are very common in the Chaco during the dry season. The spirits are believed to enter into the body through the throat or the breast, but this is prevented by the protecting necklace. Hence, when a Choroti Indian sells his necklace or leaves off wearing it, his comrades say that he will most certainly soon fall ill. The same idea I found prevailing among the Mataco-Nocténes of Bolivia, where such ornaments are worn by both sexes. Thus the son of a chief, who was just at the age of puberty, one day appeared painted red in the face with *urucú*, and with a large necklace which covered the neck and the breast. When I asked the father why his son had put on these things, he answered: »It is in order that he may not fall ill». Both among the Mataco and the Choroti it is customary that children of both sexes go totally naked up to the age of eight to ten years, but nearly always they wear collars and facial paintings which most certainly are not »ornaments» in the civilized sense of the word.

Among the South American Indians in general it is a common custom to tie round a limb, for instance the wrist or the leg, a leather strap or some other kind of band, professedly with a view to making the arm or the leg strong. The Chaco Indians also commonly wear such ligatures